

Appl. No.: 10/669,980
Amdt. dated 08/02/2005
Reply to Office action of 07/01/2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1, 16, and 23 have been amended to further distinguish the claimed invention over the cited references. New Claims 24 and 25 are dependent on Claims 16 and 23, respectively, and include subject matter that has previously been presented in original Claim 3.

Claims 1 - 9 and 13 - 23 have been rejected as being anticipated by US Patent No. 6,187,411 to Palmer. Claims 7, 9, 14, and 15 have also been rejected as being obvious in view of Palmer. Claims 10 - 13 have been rejected as unpatentable over the combination of Palmer and U.S. Patent No. 3,381,420 to Brink et al.

Palmer describes a panel having an improved tolerance for damage caused by impacts from a foreign object. The panels described in Palmer have a foam core that is sandwiched between a pair of skins comprising a fibrous material, such as glass, boron, carbon, Kevlar, etc. Stitching is used to attach the skins to the core. Palmer describes a foam core that is preferably non-porous and that is relatively non-compressible. The assembled panel may be conformed to a desired configuration by impregnating the skins with resin, which is then cured in place. Palmer does not disclose or suggest a panel having skins having a honeycomb cross-section. Palmer also does not disclose or suggest a panel wherein a portion of the foam core infiltrates the skin layers.

Brink describes a flexible polymeric foam having at least one metallized film sheet adhered to a surface of the foam. The foam described in Brink is flexible and includes interconnecting cells so that the foam may be compressed by evacuating air from within the cells. The film sheet comprises a plastic film having barrier properties so that air is prevented from re-entering the foam after it has been collapsed.

To further distinguish the claimed invention, Claims 1, 16, and 23 have been amended to include the recitation that at least one of the fabric layers comprises a honeycomb cross-section. A laminate having outer skins that are formed into a honeycomb cross-section is neither disclosed nor suggested by cited references. In addition, original Claim 3 and new Claims 24 and 25 recite that the cellular material at least partially infiltrates the fabric layers. Palmer describes a panel wherein the skins are stitched to a previously prepared foam core. As a result, the rigid foam core described in Palmer does not infiltrate the skin layers. Thus, all pending claims are patentable over the cited references.

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It is respectfully submitted that all pending claims are now in condition for immediate allowance and an early notification of the allowability of these claims is earnestly solicited. If any matters remain to be resolved, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned attorney by telephone at 704-444-1185 to expedite prosecution of this application.

Conclusion

In view of the amendments and remarks made above, Applicant submits that the pending claims are now in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests that the claims be allowed to issue. If the Examiner wishes to discuss the application or the comments herein, the Examiner is urged to contact the undersigned by telephone.

It is not believed that extensions of time or fees for net addition of claims are required, beyond those that may otherwise be provided for in documents accompanying this paper. However, in the event that additional extensions of time are necessary to allow consideration of this paper, such extensions are hereby petitioned under 37 CFR § 1.136(a), and any fee required therefore (including fees for net addition of claims) is hereby authorized to be charged to Deposit Account No. 16-0605.

Respectfully submitted,



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CERTIFICATION OF FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

I hereby certify that this paper is being facsimile transmitted to the U. S. Patent and Trademark Office at Fax No. (571) 273-8300 on the date shown below.



Grace R. Rippey

August 2, 2005
Date